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**WAR DEPARTMENT**  
**Office of the Chief of Engineers**  
**WASHINGTON**

15 May 1944

SPETI.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Topographic Subcommittee, JIC,  
Washington, D. C.

Subject: Decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographical Names.

1. I have recently discussed with Admiral Bryan, Hydrographer, U.S.N., and some theatre groups of G-2 the effect of certain recent decisions of USBCN upon the production of charts, maps and intelligence publications. It has been concluded that JCS should take some action in the matter for the guidance of Army and Navy map, chart and intelligence publishing agencies.
2. USBCN is the agency established by executive order for the fixing of general rules and for rendering specific decisions with respect to the treatment of geographical place names, including rules for treatment of foreign languages, systems of transliteration, names to be applied to new places, etc.
3. The Army Map Service is the extension of its map production to many foreign areas found itself greatly handicapped in attempting to formulate policies which would be consistent within themselves, and which would lead to results consistent with the publications of the Hydrographic Office and others. Although the USBCN has been in official existence for many years, lack of personnel has rendered it impotent. The Board was re-vitalized by the application of OCE mapping and intelligence funds with the view to having it prepare, through coordination with the several interested Federal agencies, rules and policies urgently needed for the vast mapping program.
4. Unfortunately the Board has moved very slowly, with the result that many of its decisions have appeared long after maps, charts and intelligence products have been published. In rendering decisions, the Board has attempted, by direct correspondence from the Secretary of the Interior to the chiefs of the producing agencies, to enforce its policies by demanding revision and re-issue of offending publications. Further, the Board has reversed itself in some cases, nullifying decisions made many years ago and considered as firm by map and chart producers. In many ways it now appears that, although the Board has been extremely helpful, it is becoming arbitrary and its operations may prove quite embarrassing to the War and Navy Departments.

OSD review(s) completed.

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5. I feel it essential, therefore, that JCS issue a statement of principles for the support of Army and Navy map, chart and intelligence agencies. Suggested draft of paper on this subject is attached hereto.

/s/ Herbert B. Loper

HERBERT B. LOPER,  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,  
OCE Representative on  
Topographical Subcommittee.

2 Encls.:  
Cy of draft "Functions",  
USMCN;  
Cy of proposed draft of  
JIC paper, in dupl.

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ORIGINAL DOCUMENT MISSING PAGE(S):

ENCLOSURES